



Congressman Jon Porter

Veterans Update

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"It is the bravery and courage of our veterans that has protected our nation from foreign invaders and brought democracy to the far reaches of the world."

Did you know?

- **Nevada is home to more than 240,000 veterans**

Porter Report - Veterans

As Congress enters its August recess, my commitment to supporting veterans in Southern Nevada and across the nation remains strong. In the 108th session of Congress, I have worked hard to ensure veterans are afforded the opportunities they deserve. In this edition of the "Porter Report" I have focused on veterans' legislation that has been passed by the House of Representatives this year and my actions for rural veterans in Southern Nevada.

Veterans Legislation in Congress



Our nation's veterans selflessly stood in harm's way as the guardians of our most fundamental freedoms - life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Congress has worked hard to support the values and principles our veterans share. I have highlighted some of the bills that have passed the House of Representatives with my vote in the 108th Congress:

The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act (Passed the House May 2003) would increase disability compensation rates to veterans with service-connected disabilities as well as dependency and indemnity compensation rates for survivors of certain service-connected disabilities.

The Veterans Entrepreneurship and Benefits Improvement Act (Passed the House June 2003) would provide disabled veterans with assistance in starting and growing small business enterprises. The plan also would authorize the use of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits to pay for non-degree, non-credit entrepreneurship courses for eligible veterans at approved institutions.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2004 (Passed in the House May 2003) would instruct the Secretary of Defense to review Survivor Benefit Program (SBP) procedures in order to ensure equitable treatment for the survivors of all men and women who served, regardless of circumstances surrounding their death. This legislation would also instruct the Secretary of Defense to establish an outreach program to assist TRICARE beneficiaries in obtaining better access to health care—understanding the specifics of the coverage, obtaining more provider information and gaining more assistance in resolving any difficulties with the program that they may encounter.

As the 108th Congress continues, I intend to further my support for important veterans' issues. As your Representative I am actively working to further the progress Congress has made and to support our nation's veterans.

Issue Brief: Rural Veterans

Providing care for veterans living in rural areas is an important issue in Nevada's Third Congressional District. Not all veterans live in close proximity to health care facilities, but their needs are just as great as veterans who live in urban locations.

In the 108th Congress, the Rural Veterans Access to Care Act of 2003, HR 2379, has been introduced to improve access to health care for rural veterans. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation.

HR 2379 would ensure that funds are allocated to improve access to medical services for highly rural or geographically remote veterans. Protecting the needs and rights of veterans is an important consideration regardless of where they live.

This legislation is currently pending in the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. While I am not a member of this committee, I fully support this legislation and will continue to work for Nevada's veterans on the federal level.

Establishing a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Laughlin

I recently contacted the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony Principi, regarding veterans' health care in Southern Nevada. The Department of Veterans Affairs is currently in the process of examining its health care network and assessing the efficiency and positioning of its medical facilities. I have urged Secretary Principi to authorize the creation of a Community-Based



Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) for the veterans of the Laughlin area who face exceptional hardships from a lack of accessible health care

Existing VA facilities do not adequately meet the primary healthcare needs of veterans residing in the Laughlin area. Patients must drive approximately 200 miles round trip to receive healthcare in Las

Vegas. During much of the year, high temperatures in the Mojave desert combined with congested infrastructure make travel difficult and dangerous for older veterans.

I have also been active in working towards the establishment of a veterans' health care facility in Las Vegas to ensure that veterans have access to health care in an easily accessible location and are not forced to travel across the city to different locations in order to receive the care then need.

Contact Me

Should you require additional information regarding veterans' issues, if you would like to inform me of your views, or if you require assistance with Veterans Affairs claims, please contact me anytime in either my Henderson, NV or Washington, DC offices.

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